

## **Physical and Social Science Research Task Team Terms of Reference**

### **Background:**

The FY2004 House and Senate Appropriations Committee Reports contain language that challenged explicitly the organization of research in NOAA's primary research office and implicitly raised the issue of how NOAA's research should be organized to provide the best service to the nation. In response to the Congressional concerns, NOAA asked its Science Advisory Board (SAB) to establish a Research Review Team with the broad task of providing findings and recommendations for NOAA to use to enhance its research organization and connection to operational activities.

The NOAA Research Review Team (under the auspices of the NOAA Science Advisory Board) conducted a "Review of the Organization and Management of Research in NOAA." The team's report is posted at <http://www.sab.noaa.gov/Reports/Reports.html>.

The report makes the following recommendation with regard to the location of research in NOAA:

"Recommendation: Consistent with the organizational principles given in Section II and the concepts associated with research and scientific advice as identified in the Findings, NOAA should develop a clear set of criteria for determining where research programs are located within NOAA. These criteria should be applied to new programs immediately, and over the next two years, the Research Board should apply these criteria in a review of the organizational location of the existing research activities and identify opportunities for possible migration." (page 17)

NOAA responded the NRRT Report with a proposed set of actions that was transmitted to OMB by Otto Wolfe on behalf of the Department of Commerce on October 25, 2004. The NOAA response included a proposal for an external review, the Ecosystem Task Team, to identify criteria to determine where ecosystem research should be located, and to make recommendations based on the criteria. NOAA is in the process of establishing the Ecosystem Task Team. In addition, the NOAA response stated:

"In parallel with this effort, NOAA's Research Council will develop criteria to determine the location of all other research in NOAA. The Research Council's criteria and the ecosystem task team report will be implemented in the following planning programming, and budget cycle to ensure the proper placement of research in NOAA."

Thus, the NOAA Research Council has established the Physical and Social Science Research Task Team (PSTT) to develop criteria to determine the location of "all other

research in NOAA.” The definition of research will be that approved by the NOAA Executive Council. The PSTT will work closely with other teams who are responding to the Research Review Team report, particularly the ecosystem team. It will make its efforts consistent with the NOAA 5 and 20 year research plans.

**Purpose:**

The Physical and Social Science Research Task Team will develop criteria to determine the location of all research, other than ecosystem research, within NOAA. It will consider the organizational and geographical placement of resources and programs. It will make recommendations to the Research Council concerning location of existing and future research and potential opportunities for migration. These recommendations may include options for the consideration of the Council.

**Term:**

The PSTT will be dissolved after its report on criteria and recommendations are complete and approved by NOAA senior management. Implementation of adopted recommendations and approved actions will be through the NOAA matrix programs and line organizations, using the PPBES process.

**Membership:**

Alexander E. MacDonald (Chair)  
Louis Uccellini (Member)  
Richard Fulton (Member)  
Michael Sissenwine (Member)  
Jean Snider (Member)  
Al Powell (Member)  
Peter Ortner (Member)  
Avery Sen (Member)

Julian Wang (Technical Coordinator)

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Parallel to the PSTT, the Ecosystem Task Team and the associated internal NOAA support activities will be developing recommendations. To assure compatibility of these two efforts, Michael Sissenwine, chair of the Internal Ecosystem Science Task Team will participate in the PSTT. Some members of the PSTT will also participate in related meetings and activities of the internal and external Ecosystem Task Team.

The Technical Coordinator for the PSTT effort will be responsible for organizational and logistical aspects of the PSTT effort. Currently, the PSTT is anticipating meeting approximately one day per month, with other business conducted through email and short teleconferences.

Organizational roles are:

PSTT – Develop proposed criteria for the location of research and research programs and outline potential organizational migration. The criteria and options for changes of NOAA's research configuration will be made available to the performing organizations for their review and comment. The criteria and options will be presented to the NOAA Research Council for review, modification and approval before being presented to the NEP and the NEC.

NOAA Research Council – Review, modify and approve the PSTT Recommendations before they are presented to NOAA senior management.

Science Advisory Board – Review and critique the PSTT Recommendations.

NEC – Final recommendation to NOAA Administrator concerning the proposed criteria and changes.

NOAA Administrator – Final decision concerning the recommendations of the NEC.

### **Decision Making Process**

PSTT decisions will be accomplished by consensus. The Chair will strive for consensus on every issue. Those issues that cannot be resolved within the group will be resolved by the Chair. During the interactions with the Research Council, the Chair will explicitly identify those issues that did not achieve consensus within the PSTT.